

MINUTES
GREEN BAY TRANSIT COMMISSION
Wednesday, October 16, 2013
901 University Avenue, Commission Room
8:15 a.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Roger Kolb, Chair; John Withbroe, Vice Chair; David Harp, Kevin Kuehn and Ron Antonneau

MEMBERS EXCUSED: Scottie Corrigan, Secretary; and Alderman Jim Warner

OTHERS PRESENT: Tom Wittig, Transit Director; Patty Kiewiz, Assistant Transit Director; Essie Fels, Recording Secretary; Lisa Conard, Brown County Planning; Vincent Caldara, MV; Bill Meindl, Green Bay Development News; Jason Drake, Larry Juley, Keith Schneider, and April Herlache

1. Call the meeting to order

Chair R. Kolb called the meeting to order at 8:17 a.m.

2. Approval of Agenda

J. Withbroe made a motion to approve the October 16, 2013 agenda. D. Harp seconded the motion. Motion carried.

3. Approval of the minutes of the September 25, 2013 meeting

J. Withbroe made a motion to approve the minutes from the September 25, 2013 meeting. K. Kuehn seconded the motion. Motion carried.

4. Discussion: Green Bay Metro proposed 2014 Operations Budget.

T. Wittig informed the Commission that 2014 will have some challenges. Green Bay Metro has prepared for these challenges. P. Kiewiz and P. Manley will present the logistics of the budget. T. Wittig stated he is proud to say there will be no service cuts or fixed route fare increases. Our revenues from fare boxes continue to rise, even though ridership remains status quo this year. With that said, our 2014 budget, except for the things that are uncontrollable, is just a small percentage higher than a year ago. He is very happy with the staff and how they managed the system over the last year.

P. Kiewiz stated we have provided a few different documents in your packets. We just handed out a revised reversion that has a small needed change. The documents show how our dollars are split up according to what is paid by federal and state and each municipality's portion.

P. Kiewiz asked if the commissioners could look at the 2014 Green Bay Metro Budget Summary and, in particular, the variances to the budget. This is a nice summary of the changes to the budget from last year to this year. Overall, with the ups and downs, we do

have a change of about \$9,800. However, if you take a look at the municipality's portions, you will notice everyone kind of went up there. The City had a substantial increase as well as Ashwaubenon. The big reason for this is the Oneida Tribe no longer contributing to Metro's services. The Oneida Tribe use to pay roughly \$150,000 to \$160,000 a year, so that kind of had to get dispersed.

K. Kuehn asked if Ashwaubenon has approved that.

P. Kiewiz stated she has worked very closely with Ashwaubenon and do not see any issues there.

R. Kolb asked if Ashwaubenon is aware of the increases.

P. Kiewiz commented yes. Ashwaubenon is aware that their portion is up to \$223,000, where they were typically at \$100,000. Ashwaubenon agrees whole heartily with the importance of having transit and how important it is to their community. She also stated Ashwaubenon wanted to make sure Paratransit service was able to remain in their village, and they know that in order to do that, you need to have the fixed route.

R. Kolb asked why Bellevue's portion has gone down.

P. Kiewiz stated we had some changes out there as well. When we make changes to the whole pie, everyone's portions change. We made modifications on Route 18 with some extra service going out to the new Costco and adjusted the Paratransit percentages down to where they needed to be.

A couple of things she wanted to point out is that there is a bit of an increase in health and dental insurance in the budget and Pam had worked with Dawn in Finance to help Metro pay back their portion of the City's unfunded pension liability in a more timely matter, so we have increased that. The pension number has never been budgeted in the Metro budget as far as she is aware of, and it is about \$50,000 a year. Also, in 2012 and 2013, Green Bay Metro received a substantial rebate from TMI (Transit Mutual Insurance) of \$115,000 per year. We will not receive that for 2014.

T. Wittig stated back in 2010, the marketing expenses had been substantially higher due to the development and implementation of Green Bay Metro's new website. For 2014, we feel that we are now in a position to use the tools we had spent the money on, such as our website, social media and positive word of mouth, to market our transit system. That is the reason for the decrease in the marketing budget.

K. Kuehn asked if the overtime and leave time is pretty standard for us to have an 18% increase. How do you determine the budget for overtime?

P. Kiewiz stated we prepare something that is considered our service characteristics. It shows how many hours we operate and it gives us the guidance on how many labor hours we need to have. From there, Pam and I go back and decide at what point we make that cut off for overtime versus filling positions.

K. Kuehn asked is it in proportion or in relation to vacation, so when someone is gone that route now is overtime.

P. Kiewiz stated not always, but it can be. We do have what you call extra board individuals. We have folks that sit on this board and cover for sick time and vacations. So what we do is figure out what is reasonable for us to fill these positions and what do we want to fill in as overtime. Obviously, we can reduce the number of overtime hours by hiring additional bodies, but, with doing that, you then have the benefit package to consider.

P. Kiewiz commented there are two other things she would like to point out in the budget. We have been notified by the State to count on 55.25% for federal and state operating funding, down from 57% in 2013. In regard to Paratransit expenses; Essie has been doing a phenomenal job with this. We have worked very hard on doing assessments and screenings internally to make sure we have the individual using the transportation mode that is best for them. So we were able to bring those numbers into realistic numbers.

P. Kiewiz stated that if the Commission would have any questions, she would be happy to address them. She also commented P. Manley did an awesome job assisting with the budget.

R. Kolb commented that it is an excellent budget with an increase of just .1% (\$9,800) for the total budget. He stated we had years where budgets were decided by what service cuts you wanted to make. The last couple of years we haven't done that, which is excellent.

K. Kuehn asked if the City was on board with the \$1.3 million.

P. Kiewiz commented the City's portion is \$1.5 million and will be levying \$1.3 million and the remaining balance will come out of transits reserves.

P. Kiewiz explained what happens at the end of the year for transit. We have to end with a zero balance; there is no banking of money. We send back to the City of Green Bay their portion of unused funds, just like any other municipality. Now, what the City of Green Bay does is take their portion and put it into the reserve account. That is how our reserve account develops.

P. Kiewiz commented there is a separate fund that Transit has every year after our audit is done, which comes from our accumulated depreciation expense. Whatever we have accumulated from the previous year is billed to each of the municipalities, based upon their percentages. Obviously, we have capital things that are depreciating and will need money at some point to be able to replace these things. So we do bill the municipalities, and that money goes into a separate fund for capital assets.

R. Kolb asked when the 2014 budget goes to City Council.

T. Wittig stated it goes to Finance on October 29th, 2013 for the finance hearing and then to City Council November 5th, 2013.

5. Discussion: Proposed Route changes within the Metro Fixed Route System.

P. Kiewiz updated the commissioners that next month we will have a busy meeting. We will have a PowerPoint to share with you and that meeting will also serve as our public hearing for these route changes. In your packet you will find a copy of our public notice. We will be holding a couple of different informational meetings for people to come and ask questions and get an understanding of what the changes are, as well as the date of the public hearing.

Over the several times that Lisa has shared her reviews and reports, we do know we have routes that are operating below the systems standards, as well as a couple of timing issues with the west side transfer points. Even with the needed change to Route 16, we were holding tight because we wanted to make all the route changes all at once, so we do have a series of changes coming up.

The proposed Routes 3 and 4 do operate the same, but run bi-directional. We are making a little change to Route 4 on the order of how we do things so it gets back up to the Plaza for the transfer a little bit better. We will also be coming down Velp Avenue and servicing some good expansion in that area. Currently, individuals have to walk from that area all the way over to Mather Street so we want to increase service there. Route 3 will remain the way it is.

The proposed Route 5 will be replacing our X-Press Route because the X-Press has been operating well below our system average. This route will only run during peak hours (4 hours in the morning and 4 hours in the afternoon). This will be very similar to our old Route 9. It will go up and down Ninth Street and then make a connection at the Plaza.

The proposed Route 6 changes are considerable, in that we will be bringing that route back down to the Transit Center. It will still be making connections at the Plaza. This Route will go to hourly service at night and on Saturdays. I should say that there is some reduction in the service hours, but with the demand and what is needed there; we will be in good shape.

J. Withbroe asked how are the time points for these routes.

P. Kiewiz commented well, some of our routes have a considerable amount of extra time right now. Obviously, we do get boats and trains, especially with those routes going to the west side. It is difficult to build in time on every trip for boats and trains because that is not realistic either; so we always have to find that happy medium. There is roughly 6 extra minutes in these routes.

R. Kolb asked if we are currently getting delays due to the Tower Drive (bridge out).

P. Kiewiz stated yes. We have had some tough times with that, but they are getting a little bit better with the changing of the detours. Downtown is a bit hectic around the 4 o'clock and 5 o'clock hours; we get a little stuck and have to use some of our limited service routes to help us catch up on times. Our dispatchers and operators, do an awesome job working together, keeping those buses on time, and making the changes and modifications to keep the buses all on track.

R. Kolb noticed on Routes 6, 8 and 9; we are looking at more service downtown and coming to the transit center.

The Route 18 currently does that right now. Route 18's change is not in the packet. It was a very minor change. The change will actually take effective this week, Thursday, October 17, 2013. Bellevue has requested service out to Costco. In order to do those things time-wise, we needed to get the downtown changed around. We are hoping to increase some frequency downtown.

For the proposed Routes 8 and 9: As we move forward through this process, the 9 will be falling off here and there will only be a Route 8. There will be two (2) buses on this route. It is now going to be the exact same route. There is no reason to have it as two (2) route numbers. As with the proposed Route 6, I am recommending that this route goes down to hourly service at night as well as on Saturdays.

The proposed Route 10 is going to be the old Route 16. Because of the drastic changes to this route, we do think it is important to renumber it. We do not want people thinking that this is Route 16, and that it will get them to the Casino. Route 16 has been operating below the systems standards. We are going to take this opportunity to try and increase those service areas. We have worked with Brown County Planning, and have discussed maybe taking this time to service the Broadway area. It has come up several times in the past and this is a good time to implement it. There will be one little change to this Route 10 map due to some feedback with concerns over Ashland Avenue and some crash studies. We do not want our buses in harm's way. With this Route 10, we will be servicing the Oneida Street area down to the Innovative Services building, a temporary employment agency and Parkview Rd. Currently; we get a lot of individuals who have to walk over to reach these locations. For Paratransit boundary purposes, this route will still service out to Packerland Drive. Broadway will be covered from Cormier down to Parkview Rd. and it will service the Railroad Museum, Ashwaubenon Park, and a lot of businesses. We will also be able to give same-side service to the Prevea on Pilgrim Way.

The proposed Route 17 is going to have a bit of a time point change, but it is basically the same route. A couple of little changes we are looking at is not going into the Wal-Mart parking lot (there is not a lot of service there), and we will not be going up to the door at Humana. We may be only serving two (2) people a day at Humana, and obviously, that does not meet the standards of mass transit.

Those are the proposed route changes. We will start holding the public meetings soon. We do share all those comments and feedbacks with you. It will come in your next packet and at the next Commission Meeting we will be holding the public hearing and seeking an action on these changes.

R. Kolb suggested you put arrows on the maps for the direction the buses would be traveling.

P. Kiewiz stated absolutely. This map was just a sample map to give an overview of the changes.





R. Kolb asked is the TDP being coordinated with these changes or are they incorporated in there.

L. Conard stated TDP reflects changes through September 3rd. We do not anticipate incorporating these changes into TDP as written. These routes will be implemented on December 2nd.




6. Presentation: Overview of the *Draft 2014-2018 Transit Development Plan (TDP)* for the Green Bay Metro System.

L. Conard stated a Transit Development Plan (TDP) is prepared approximately every five years. A TDP is a five-year plan that examines various aspects of the system including level of service, fare structure, operating and capital needs, paratransit program, and overall budget. The TDP also makes recommendations for improvements.

L. Conard reviewed the status of the recommendations contained in the last TDP.

Previous TDP Recommendations		
Item	Recommendation	Status
 Full Service Routes	Reduce route length in areas where passenger boardings are low or non-existent in an effort to improve reliability for passengers.	The Transit Commission approved route modification plan and service began on August 31, 2009. Additional route changes were made in 2010, 2011, 2012, and 2013.
 Additional Hub on the west side	Study the feasibility and desirability of establishing a second hub on the west side of the Fox River.	Metro staff designed and overhauled service on the west side to include transfer locations at Green Bay Plaza, Bay Park Square, and Shopko in De Pere in 2011. Bus bays on Oneida Street completed in 2012 serve as a transfer site.
 Bus Fleet	Apply for 35-foot buses as needed to replace aging vehicles.	Nine new buses delivered in 2009. Ten new buses delivered in 2011. Additional buses programmed but not funded.
 Bus Fleet	Install new fare collection system to more accurately record ridership and other data.	Completed.

Previous TDP Recommendations

Item	Recommendation	Status
 Fares	Metro should consider reducing its fares to make transit more appealing to people who do not currently ride the bus.	1. Student cash fare reduced from \$1.50 to \$1.00 in 2011. 2. Green Saturday (everyone rides free on Saturdays) introduced in 2011. 3. Day and Week Passes introduced in 2012 to provide more fare options.
 U-Pass Program	Investigate expanding the program to include other post-secondary institutions. UW-Green Bay existing participant.	Rasmussen College (2011) and St. Norbert College (2012) were added to the program, and other entities have been invited to participate.
 Modified Fixed Route Service for Green Bay Packers Games	Create service appealing to residents and visitors attending activities at and around Lambeau Field in an effort to reduce traffic congestion, reduce vehicle emissions, and promote responsible driving.	Service implemented in 2011. Four Game Day fixed routes offer service before and after all home games. Service is free and open to the general public.


L. Conard provided an overview of the current service area and level of service for the full service fixed route bus system. L. Conard also provided information regarding bus fares and noted that the Commission raised cash fares in 2005 and pass fares in 2009. When compared to other systems, Metro offers relatively low fares.


Fixed Route Bus Fare Comparisons

		Adult Cash Fare	Student Cash Fare	Reduced Cash Fare	30-Day Adult Pass	30-Day Student Pass	30-Day Reduced Pass
Wisconsin Peer Systems							
1.	Appleton (Valley Transit)	\$1.80	\$1.80	\$0.90	\$56.00	\$56.00	\$40.00
2.	Beloit Transit	\$1.50	\$1.50	\$0.75	none	\$21.35	none
3.	Eau Claire Transit	\$1.50	\$1.50	\$0.75	\$45.00	\$11.25	\$23.00
4.	Fond du Lac Area Transit	\$1.50	\$1.25	\$0.75	\$38.00	\$32.00	\$38.00
5.	Kenosha Transit	\$1.75	\$1.25	\$0.85	\$50.00	\$35.00	\$25.00
6.	La Crosse Municipal Transit	\$1.50	\$1.25	\$0.75	\$35.00	\$23.00	\$25.00
7.	Oshkosh (Go Transit)	\$1.00	\$0.50	\$0.50	\$25.00	\$25.00	\$25.00
8.	Racine (Belle Urban System)	\$2.00	\$1.50	\$1.00	\$65.00	\$65.00	\$30.00
9.	Sheboygan (Shoreline Metro)	\$1.75	\$1.75	\$0.85	\$48.00	\$48.00	\$48.00
10.	Waukesha Metro	\$2.00	\$1.25	\$1.00	\$46.00	\$35.00	\$30.00
11.	Wausau (Metro Ride)	\$1.50	\$1.25	\$0.75	\$36.00	\$18.00	\$18.00
	Average:	\$1.62	\$1.35	\$0.80	\$44.40	\$33.60	\$30.20
	Green Bay Metro:	\$1.50	\$1.00	\$0.75	\$35.00	\$20.00	\$25.00
	Difference:	(\$0.12)	(\$0.35)	(\$0.05)	(\$9.40)	(\$13.60)	(\$5.20)

L. Conard provided an overview of the paratransit service area and service level. L. Conard provided an overview of per trip costs.

L. Conard noted that MV, a private-for-profit transportation company, provides the service.

Paratransit Trip Costs			
Trip Type	Passenger or Agency Payment	Metro Payment	MV Receives
Non-Ambulatory Passenger (non-agency)	\$3.00	\$19.67	\$22.67
 Non-Ambulatory Passenger (agency)	\$7.00	\$15.67	\$22.67
Ambulatory Passenger (non-agency)	\$3.00	\$15.37	\$18.37
Ambulatory Passenger (agency)	\$7.00	\$11.87	\$18.37



In addition to the cost per trip, Metro pays for all fuel for the program.

P. Kiewiz stated this amounts to \$2.20-\$2.32 per trip.

R. Antonneau asked about the high-cost per trip and asked about the per trip cost 10 years ago.

L. Conard and P. Kiewiz recalled it was in the \$14.00-\$15.00 range per trip.

R. Antonneau stated that paratransit costs are outpacing inflation and does not find this acceptable.

R. Kolb noted that Commission issued a Request for Proposals (RFPs) for the service and MV was awarded the contract as they were the lowest cost qualified provider.

L. Conard noted that a total of five proposals were received.

L. Conard encouraged the Commission to review the paratransit chapter of the Draft TDP. The report identifies historical costs, ridership levels, and outlines potential cost saving measures.

L. Conard stated that Metro staff has done a good job containing the cost of the program. Metro staff has assisted paratransit clients in becoming fixed route bus users for some or all of their trips. The Commission also approved a free fixed route bus fare for all certified paratransit clients.

T. Wittig stated that wheelchair boardings on the fixed route system continue to increase and referred to the graphic in the packet detailing the growth.

Discussion occurred regarding the \$7.00 agency fare.

P. Kiewiz stated that the 2014 budget proposal includes an agency fare increase to \$8.00.

P. Kiewiz stated the base fare of \$3.00 (\$1.50 cash bus fare X 2) is established by the federal government. The only way to raise it would be to raise the cash bus fare.

R. Antonneau stated that raising the cash bus fare to \$2.00, thereby making the base paratransit fare \$4.00, is an option. The agency fare could also be set higher.

T. Wittig stated that it is important to keep fares in good balance. Metro has not raised fares lately, yet revenue has increased.

All agreed that an increase in any fixed route bus fare may lead to a decrease in ridership.

K. Kuehn stated that he would like Metro to maintain current ridership levels as opposed to increasing fares and potentially losing ridership.

Discussion occurred regarding the benefits of providing the paratransit service in-house, versus continuing to contract with a private-for-profit company.

T. Wittig stated that a significant amount of capital funds would be required to obtain all of the necessary equipment (vehicles, software, etc...) to take over the system.

L. Conard noted that the TDP suggests an incremental approach, if found to be feasible.

P. Kiewiz stated that taking over dispatch and scheduling will likely lead to appropriate trip assignment (savings).

R. Antonneau asked staff for a bullet point list of key issues facing the system.

T. Wittig stated he has already prepared a list as part of the annual budget process and will be submitting the list to the Commission at the November 25th meeting.

L. Conard reviewed the public participation efforts for the plan. They include a 30-day review and comment period, a public informational meeting with a presentation by staff, an opportunity for the public to ask questions, and a formal public hearing.

The public meeting will be held on Monday, October 28th at 4:15 in the Transit Commission room and all are invited.

L. Conard stated that a METRO RIDER ALERT has been prepared and is available on all vehicles. In addition, information can be found on Facebook. An informational postcard is also being sent to over 130 individuals, businesses, and organizations in the area.

L. Conard stated that she will be looking for formal action by the Commission on Monday, November 25th.

7. Director's Report

T. Wittig announced the employee of the month for May, Tom VanBeek. Tom is one of our mechanics. He has been with Metro since 2002. He was unable to attend the meeting today, but I look forward to presenting his award to him this afternoon. He has done an awesome job.

T. Wittig stated Green Bay Metro continues to receive a lot of very positive input on our transit system and we are very proud of it. The Packers Game Day Routes continue to grow more and more popular. The ridership overall is up over last year. Lamer's buses are out there, they have a great purpose, and it seems they are expanding out in areas where public transportation isn't, and that is good for the community.

8. Miscellaneous Reports and Other Business

P. Kiewiz shared with the Commissioners that Metro participated with the Brown County Library-Summer Reading Program. Metro had received a thank you letter from the Brown County Library for supporting this event.

P. Kiewiz stated in your packet we have provided the quarterly Fixed Route Mobility Transportation summary which shows a significant increase.

P. Manley stated in your packets you will find the operating expenses report for September. She gave a brief overview of the revenue and expense reports. P. Manley stated that if the Commission would have any questions, she would be happy to address them.

9. Establish the date of the next meeting

The next meeting of the Transit Commission is scheduled for Monday, November 25, 2013 at 8:15 a.m.

10. Adjourn

Motion made by K. Kuehn, second by R. Antonneau, to adjourn at 9:50 a.m. Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,

Essie Fels